

The Painting of a Tragedy September 5

On Sept. 2, 1958, four Soviet MIGs attacked and shot down a U.S. Air Force reconnaissance C-130 aircraft -- flight 60528 -- over Soviet Armenia. The entire crew of 17 was lost. Their names are on the NSA Memorial Wall.

The Soviets at the time denied the shootdown. However, in the 1990s the Russians admitted the action and even released video from a gun sight camera on one of the four MIGs, showing the attack.



Based on this video, CIA employee Dr. John Milligan created a painting of the shootdown. Through his service as the CIA member of the SIGINT committee, John made several friends at NSA. John, now retired, recently contacted two NSA friends, including the author of this article, about contributing the painting to the National Cryptologic Museum (NCM). I contacted the museum curator, Patrick Weadon, and he said they would like to have it.

We traveled to Falls Church to pick up the painting. I took it to the NCM, where Patrick decided to place it in the conference room until a display could be created in a new museum. The painting did not have a plaque describing the activity depicted, so a couple of us created one and gave it to the museum.



The painting is still hanging in the NCM conference room. Ask to see it next time you visit.

502 CAPTION: graphic 1 --- painting of a C-130 pursued by two MiGs; graphic 2 --- photo of a plaque giving the artist's and donors' name.